ANDREAS NEMETZ’S NEUESTE POSAUN-SCHULE: AN EARLY VIENNESE TROMBONE METHOD

Howard Weiner

A notice in the *Wiener Zeitung* from September 24, 1827, announced the appearance of Andreas Nemetz’s *Neueste Posaun-Schule* (“Newest Trombone Method”) and its companion work for trumpet, the *Allgemeine Trompeten-Schule* (both published in Vienna by Anton Diabelli and Comp.; see Figure 1). Especially interesting for us is the fact that the trombone method was written by a professional trombonist active in Vienna during the mid-1820s, a time that saw, for example, the premieres of Beethoven’s late works and the creation, if not the first performances, of Schubert’s. Indeed Nemetz, “trombonist in the Imperial Royal Court Theater next to the Kärntner Gate” from 1823 to 1828, may well have been a participant in the historic concert of May 7, 1824, which took place in this same Kärntnerthor Theater, and in which Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony received its world premiere, and the Kyrie, Credo, and Agnus Dei of the *Missa Solemnis* their Viennese premiere.

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Figure 1
Notice announcing the publication of Andreas Nemetz’s *Neueste Posaun-Schule* and *Allgemeine Trompeten-Schule* (*Wiener Zeitung*, September 24, 1827)
Constant von Wurzbach supplies the following biographical information: Andreas Nemetz was born of a poor peasant family in Chalkowitz, a village in Moravia, on November 14, 1799. Already as a child he displayed considerable talent for music. To satisfy his desire to play violin, he built himself an instrument that looked like a violin and should have produced sounds similar to one, but apparently did not. He learned some music in the village school, but it was only in Kremsier that he received a solid musical education, from Leopold Kunerth, the master of the town musicians (Stadt-Turnermeister). It was also here that he learned the German language. To avoid military service he later went to Hungary. After teaching for a while in Ödenburg (today: Sopron), he moved on to Vienna, where he was engaged as trombonist in the orchestra of the court opera house, a position he occupied for five years. He then joined the Infantry Regiment Landgrave Hessen-Homburg No. 19 as Capellmeister, a position he held for eighteen years, until his death on August 21, 1846, in Vienna.

Nemetz certainly was an accomplished performer on wind instruments, but he also played piano, guitar, and violin. He composed many dances and marches for military band and published methods for horn, trumpet, and trombone, in addition to his Allgemeine Musik-Schule für Militärmusik (“General Music Method for Military Band”). Although Nemetz refers in the preface of the Newest Trombone Method to his “many years of practical experience,” and his biography, as transmitted by Wurzbach, leaves no doubt as to his mastery of the trombone, much of this opus did not originate from his own pen. Nemetz’s source is none other than the trombone method from Joseph Fröhlich’s Vollständige theoretisch-praktische Musikschule (Bonn, ca. 1811), which is, in part, a translation of André Braun’s Gamme et Méthode pour les Trombonnes (Paris, ca. 1792). Chapter 1 (“On the construction of the instrument, the manner of holding it, and the overtone series”) is taken almost verbatim from Fröhlich’s second chapter, and Chapter 2 (“The manner of sounding the tones on the instrument”) similarly from Fröhlich’s third chapter. In addition, the third paragraph of the preface is a short paraphrase of the first chapter of Fröhlich’s work.

At the end of Chapter 1, Nemetz supplies drawings of two mouthpieces for the tenor and bass trombones, respectively, which are practically identical to those in Fröhlich (see Figure 2). The tenor mouthpiece has a cup diameter of 23.5 mm and a depth of 15 mm; the bass mouthpiece, 28 and 21 mm. Like Fröhlich, Nemetz refers the reader to his trumpet method for an illustration of a suitable mouthpiece for the alto trombone. This trumpet mouthpiece, which “is also used, only with a deeper cup, for the alto trombone,” has a cup diameter of 22 mm and depth of 12 mm (see Figure 3). This, at least, has little resemblance to the one shown by Fröhlich (Figure 4).
Figure 2
Tenor and bass trombone mouthpieces: Nemetz (left), Fröhlich (right)

Figure 3
Trumpet/Alto trombone mouthpieces from Nemetz, *Allgemeine Trompeten-Schule* (Vienna, Musiksammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, S.A.73.A.34). “The two illustrated mouthpieces are suitable for any type of trumpet; namely that marked B for the first [trumpet], and that marked A for the second. The latter, which has a somewhat larger bore, is also used, but with a deeper cup, for the alto trombone.”

Figure 4
Trumpet/Alto trombone mouthpiece from Fröhlich, *Vollständiges-theoretisch-praktische Musikschule* (1811)
In spite of Nemetz’s obvious plagiarism, we should not underestimate him. His documented experience as a player becomes apparent in the ranges of the scales in Chapter 3, and in the technical demands of the etudes in Chapter 4, but even in the first two chapters there are a few things that deserve our attention.

Nemetz deals with the three sizes of trombone—alto, tenor and bass—as if they were a single instrument in B♭. In Chapter 2 he writes: “The illustrated bass, tenor, and alto trombone is pitched in B♭; this is its fundamental.” (Note the singular substantive and verb in the first part of the sentence, as well as the singular possessive pronoun in the second.) He allows only for a difference in the size of the mouthpiece, “since the mouthpiece must be different for each of the three types of trombone…” (Chapter 1), and supplies but a single slide position chart. Fröhlich, on the other hand, is inconsistent. Although saying basically the same thing (“Nothing is different but for the mouthpiece, especially for the alto trombone…”), he proceeds to describe the alto trombone as being in E♭, and also provides a separate position chart for it.

The slide position chart for an instrument in B♭ that Nemetz presents in Chapter 1 appears at first glance to be identical to that in Fröhlich, even to the slender Renaissance/Baroque form of the bell section. Further study, however, reveals some important differences. Whereas Fröhlich gives five—and in the lower positions, six—tones from the overtone series of each position (for example, B♭, f, b♭, d’, and f” in first position), Nemetz extends the upper end of the range by four or five tones (a♭’, b♭’, c”, d”, f ”) and further adds the fundamental (BB♭) below (see Plate 2). It is interesting to note that whereas Fröhlich gives only the “pure” tones of the harmonic series, Nemetz includes the fl at seventh partial, even in first position. The remark at the end of Chapter 2, that “one can produce the pedal tones only after much practice,” should indeed be taken to heart if one intends to bring off the EE (pedal E) given for seventh position.

Chapter 3 consists of various scales, starting with the major scales in the sharp keys, then those in the flat keys. These are followed by a diatonic and two chromatic scales (one showing the sharped, the other the fl atted notes) for bass trombone (E-g; in bass clef), tenor trombone (A-c”; in tenor clef), and alto trombone (f-f”; in alto clef). Slide positions, including alternate positions, are indicated for every note of these scales, in each case corresponding to the positions on a B♭ instrument (Plates 3-5).

The fourth chapter consists of etudes for the three types of trombone: five pieces in bass clef (F-f”), including a Minueto and Trio and an Andante varie, for the bass trombone, four pieces in tenor clef for the tenor (A-c”), and four in alto clef (f-e”); including a Polonaise, for the alto. Slide positions indicated for some notes in these etudes confirm the use of B♭ instruments for all three “sizes” of trombone (Plates 6-11).

I would like to call attention here to an idea that may be surprising for those of us trained in the American, German, or French school of trombone playing: the almost consistent use of first position for a♭’. This is in fact a Viennese idiosyncrasy, apparently still taught and practiced in Vienna, and one that I’ve used successfully in the “Tuba mirum” solo of Mozart’s Requiem on several occasions in recent years. This notorious third position “wolf” tone is more stable in first position. It is also easy enough to play in tune on the
early trombone, especially if the other first-position tones are taken a centimeter or so out of the completely closed position.

The fifth chapter also offers something of a surprise. It deals with the “bass or so-called Quartposaune.” After five pages of text, a slide-position chart, three pages of scales, and six pages of etudes for the three types of B♭ trombone—15 pages in all—Nemetz devotes just two pages to this bass trombone in F. The short text accompanying the slide position chart (BB-a’) and three scales (one diatonic and two chromatic) tells us only that this instrument is called a Quartposaune because it is pitched four tones lower, and is therefore larger than the other trombones, that its fundamental is F, or more rarely A♭ or G, and that it is employed especially in military bands. It is obvious, from the brevity of the text and musical material as well as its placement at the back of the method, that Nemetz did not consider this instrument to be important for “art music.” It is however noteworthy that the position chart for this bass trombone displays a somewhat more modern-looking instrument than that of the B♭ bass/tenor/alto trombone (Plate 12).

Just as the rediscovery of André Braun’s Gamme et Méthode pour les Trombonnes made it obvious that the “classical” formation of alto, tenor, and bass trombones was not the standard in Paris during the late-18th-early-19th centuries, Andreas Nemetz’s Neueste Posaun-Schule shows us that the current concept of the “historical” trombone group also does not necessarily correspond to the practice in early-19th-century Vienna. I therefore consider it appropriate to close with a paraphrase of the conclusion to my previous article: Nemetz’s identification of bass and alto trombones as instruments in B♭ is information of considerable practical importance, with significant ramifications for the performance of trombone parts in the important early-19th-century Viennese repertoire. Indeed, the necessity of reconsidering the “classical” formation of alto, tenor, and bass trombones again becomes apparent, and demonstrates the need for a reconsideration of the makeup of the trombone group in those orchestras employing period instruments.

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English Translation

Newest
Trombone Method
written
by
Andr. Nemetz
Trombonist in the Imperial Royal Court Opera Theater in Vienna
16th Work

Preface

I herewith present to the esteemed devotee of the trombone this preliminary instruction, comprehensible as it is thorough, for this instrument. This work—the result of my many years of practical experience—is not intended for musical novices. Rather, I may indeed flatter myself that those who have already received their ordination through Apollo, or at least are almost at the point of receiving it, will be able to execute with accuracy and expression, with slight effort and little sacrifice of time, all that is worthy of being called a concern of this noble instrument.

In order not to tire the esteemed reader, I will express myself briefly, and in my preface say only a few things about the value of the trombone.

The Italians call the instrument “trombone” [i.e., “big trumpet”], since, in terms of its provenance as well as its usage, it is most like the trumpet. Solemn and moving sentiments, inspiring devotion, are the function of this instrument; therefore it has also been employed since ancient times for the accompaniment of sacred song; and in more recent times it has achieved, through Mozart, the immortal, who so well understood the effects of all the instruments, the importance and position of honor it now occupies.

Inasmuch as I flatter myself with the hope that this work will be appreciated for its merits, I present it confidently to the devotees of this instrument.

Chapter I
On the construction of the instrument, the manner of holding it, and the overtone series

The trombone consists of a number of tubes that are inserted into one another, and through whose lengthening and shortening the various tones are produced. It has the following parts [see Plate 2]:

1) the bell branch (A)
2) the large branch (B)
3) the branch into which the mouthpiece is inserted (C)
4) the large slide (D), into which the large branch (B) and that of the mouthpiece (C)
are inserted (the two inserted branches B and C are also called the “core”)
5) the mouthpiece (F)
6) the small stay, which holds the large branch and that of the mouthpiece together (G)
7) the small stay, which holds the large slide together (H)

One holds the instrument by the small stay (G) so that one can bring the mouthpiece directly to the mouth.

The large slide is held with the right hand by the small stay (H). This slide is moveable, and through pushing and pulling it one produces the relationships of the tones. As with every wind instrument, the construction of the mouthpiece here is also one of the most important considerations. Since the mouthpiece must be different for each of the three types of trombone, I include here two drawings [Figure 2], that is, A for the tenor and B for the bass trombone. The [mouthpiece] for the alto trombone is usually like that for the trumpet [illustrated], with the depth of the cup [labelled] A, in my General Trumpet Method [Figure 3].

Chapter II
The manner of sounding the tones on the instrument

The most important aspect of the execution is that it be songlike; therefore those who want to play this instrument well must attain full control of their embouchure in order to lend the necessary inflection to all the tones and to the entire performance.

The illustrated bass, tenor, and alto trombone is pitched in B♭; this is its fundamental. Thus one obtains, without moving the slide, the fundamental B♭, the fifth F, the octave B♭, the tenth D, the twelfth F, and so forth, if the wide mouthpiece of the bass trombonist would not hinder the upward progression. See the overtone series. Page 5 [Plate 2].

If one pushes out approximately three inches, second position (which is actually the first draw), the entire branch becomes longer, amounting to a [descent of a] semitone, and we have the fundamental A, the fifth E, octave A, tenth C♯, and twelfth E, etc. The next draw, or third position, gives Ab; the following, or the fourth, G; the fifth, F♯; the sixth, F; the seventh, E; so that each draw or each of these positions of the trombone produces the same relationship as is shown above, and as clearly indicated at J) and K) [plate 2], where all positions of this instrument are precisely indicated with numbers, in addition to the resultant descent by semitone to E. It is obvious that in order to reach the higher tones one must close the lips more, through which the mass of air is compressed and the tone becomes more strident, since on the other hand, in order to descend, one reduces the closure of the lips and proportionally increases the amount of air according to how low and full a tone one desires.

It is very important that the student observe precisely the placement of the slide, since he will otherwise never learn to play in tune; one must also move the slide very lightly and with certainty so that the embouchure remains stable.
If we combine all of the tones produced in the various positions, we get the following complete series of tones at L, where at the same time the draws are indicated by numbers, or rather, by which position this or that tone is produced. (See page 11 [Plate 5].)

Double [i.e., additional] numbers under a note indicate that it can be produced in two ways, depending simply on the place or passage. As a rule, one always takes the nearest position in order to avoid any delay in the execution.

Note: One can produce the pedal tones only after much practice.

Chapter III
Scales
[see Plates 3-5]

Chapter IV
Exercises for the bass trombone [see Plates 6-8]
Exercises for the tenor trombone [see Plates 8-10]
Exercises for the alto trombone [see Plates 10-11]

Chapter V
Nearly all of the foregoing is also true of the bass or so-called Quart-trombone. It is called a Quart-trombone because it is tuned four tones lower; therefore it is also larger than the other trombones, and it is employed especially in the military. Its fundamental is usually F, more seldom A♭ or G.

[see Plates 12-13]

German Text

Neueste
Posaun=Schule
verfasst
von
Andr. Nemetz
Posaunist im K.K. Hofopern-Theater in Wien
16tes Werk
Vorbericht

Ich übergebe hiemit den geehrten Liebhabern der Posaune, diese, eben so fassliche, als gründliche Anleitung zur Erlernung dieses Instrumentes. Für Laien in der Musik ist dieses
Werk—das Resultat meiner vieljährigen praktischen Erfahrung—nicht bestimmt, dafür darf ich mir desto sicherer schmeicheln, dass solche, die Apollos Weihe schon empfangen haben, oder wenigstens nahe daran sind, selbe zu empfangen, mit leichter Mühe und geringem Zeitaufwande, dahin gelangen, alles dasjenige mit Richtigkeit und Ausdruck vorzutragen, was würdig ist, eine Aufgabe für dieses erhabene Instrument genannt zu werden.

Um die verehrten Leser nicht zu ermüden, will ich mich kurz fassen, und in meinem Vorberichte nur noch Einiges vom Werthe der Posaune sagen.

Die Posaune wird, weil sie, sowohl in Hinsicht des Alterthums, als der Behandlung, der Trompete am nächsten kommt, von den Italiänen Trombone genannt. Feyerliche und ergreifende Empfindungen, Erweckung der Andacht, sind die Aufgabe für dieses Instrument; daher es auch seit den ältesten Zeiten zur Begleitung des Kirchengegesanges gebraucht, und in der neueren Zeit durch Mozart, den Unsterblichen, der die Wirkung aller Instrumente so gut verstand, die Wichtigkeit und Würde erhielt, die es jetzt behauptet.


Istes Kapitel.

Vom Baue des Instruments, der Haltung desselben, und den Accorden

Die Posaune besteht aus mehreren in einander geschobenen Cylindern, durch deren Verlängerung oder Verkürzung die verschiedenen Töne erzeugt werden. Sie hat folgende Bestandtheile:

1) Die Röhre des Bechers A)
2) Die grosse Röhre B)
3) Die Röhre, in welche das Mundstück gesetzt wird C)
4) Die grosse Schiebröhre, D) in welche die grosse Röhre B) und jene des Ansatzes C) eingesetzt wird, welche beide eingesetzte Röhren B) und C) man auch den Kern nennet
5) Das Mundstück F)
6) Das kleine Querstück, welches die grosse Röhre, und jene des Ansatzes zusammen hält G)
7) Das kleine Querstück, welches die grosse Einschiebröhre allein zusammenhält H)

zu dem Wesentlichsten. Da nach den drei Arten der Posaune das Mundstück verschieden seyn muss, so füge ich hier 2 Zeichnungen desselben bey, und zwar A) für die Tenor, und B) für die Bassposaune, in dem jenes für die Alt Posaune das nämliche in der Regel, wie jenes bey der Trompete mit der Vertiefung des Kessels bey A) ist. Siehe meine allgemeine Trompetenschule.

Iltes Kapitel.
Art, die Töne auf dem Instrumente anzugeben

Das Wesentlichste des Vortrags ist, dass er gesangvoll sey; daher diejenigen, die dieses Instrument gut behandeln wollen, vor Allem Herren ihres Ansatzes werden müssen, um die nöthigen Modificationen allen Tönen, und dem ganzen Vortrage verleihen zu können.

Die vorgezeichnete Bass- Tenor- und Alt-Posaune stimmt B; dieser ist also ihr Grundton. Man erhält somit ohne Zug den Grundton B, die Quinte F, die Octave B, die Dezime D, die Duodecime F, und s.w., wenn nicht das weite Mundstück des Bassposaunisten das Fortschreiten in die Höhe hindern würde. Siehe die Accorde! Seite 5)

Zieht man ohngefähr 3 Zoll heraus, 2te Stellung (:welches eigentlich der erste Zug ist:) so wird die ganze Röhre, so viel als es einen halben Ton beträgt, länger, und wir erhalten den Grundton A, die Quinte E, 8ve A, 10me Cis, und 12me E, u.s.w: Der nächste Zug, oder die 3te Stellung gibt As; der folgende, oder die 4te G, die 5te Fis, die 6te F, die 7te E, so, dass jeder Zug, oder jede dieser Stellungen der Posaune die nämlichen Töne im nämlichen Verhältnisse gibt, wie es oben bestimmt wurde, und wie es bey J), und K), deutlich angegeben ist, wo alle Stellungen dieses Instrumentes mit Nummern, nebst dem dadurch bewirkten Absteigen durch halbe Töne bis ins E, genau bezeichnet sind. Es versteht sich, dass man, um die höheren Töne zu erlangen, die Lippen mehr schliessen müsse, wodurch die Luftmasse zusammen gedrängt, und so der Ton schärfer wird, da man im Gegentheil, um abwärts zu steigen, den Schluss der Lippen vermindert, und nach Verhältniss die Masse der Luft vermehrt, je nachdem man den Ton tiefer und voller haben will.

Sehr wichtig für den Schüler ist es, den Punkt der Abtheilung genau zu bemerken, weil er sonst nie rein blasen lernt; auch muss man die Schiebröhre sehr leicht, und mit Sicherheit bewegen, damit der Ansatz fest bleibe.

Setzen wir nun alle durch die verschiedenen Züge erhaltene Töne zusammen, so bekommen wir folgende vollständige Tonreihe bei L), wo zugleich durch Zahlen die Züge angezeigt sind, oder vielmehr, durch die wievielste Stellung dieser oder jener Ton erzeugt werde. (Siehe Seite 11:) Doppelte Ziffern unter einer Note bedeuten, dass sich dieser auf zweyerlei Art hervorbringen lasse, welches bloss von der Stelle, oder Passage abhängt. Man nimmt aber immer in der Regel den nächsten Zug um allen Aufenthalt in der Execution zu vermeiden.

NB. Die Contra=Töne kann man erst durch viele Übung herausbringen.
IIItes Kapitel.
Von den Scalen

IVtes Kapitel.
Übungen für die Bass=Posaune
Übungen für die Tenor=Posaune
Übungen für die Alt=Posaune

Vtes Kapitel.
Beinahe alles das nämliche gilt auch von der Bass= oder sogenannten Quart=Posaune. Sie heisst deswegen Quartposaune, weil sie um 4 Töne tiefer stimmt, daher auch grösser ist, als die andern Posaunen, und sie findet ihre Anwendung besonders beym Militär. Ihr Grundton ist gewöhnlich F, seltner As und G.

NOTES

1 Constant von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthum Oesterreich* (Vienna, 1869), s.v. “Nemetz, Andreas.”
5 These measurements are approximate, being taken from microfilm re-enlargements. Those for the tenor and bass mouthpieces correspond however to those given in Anthony Baines, *Brass Instruments, their History and Development* (London, 1978), p. 242.
6 “Die vorgezeichnete Bass-Tenor-und Alt-Posaune stimmt B; dieser ist also ihr Grundton.”
7 “Da nach den drey Arten der Posaune das Mundstück verschieden seyn muss…. ”
8 “Hier entscheidet nichts als das Mundstück, besonders für die Altposaune…” Fröhlich, *Musikschule*, p. 33.
9 “Die Contra=Töne kann man erst durch viele Übung herausbringen.”
10 I am grateful to Heinrich Huber (Basel), our local representative of the Viennese school, for this information.
Neueste Posaun-Schule. 


Plate 1
Title page of Nemetz's *Neueste Posaun-Schule* (Vienna, Musiksammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, S.A.75.A.29)
Plate 2
III.ES KAPITEL.

VON DEN SCALEN.

Die Accorde oder Lagen sind durch Ziffer bezeichnet.

Einfache Scale mit Kreuzen.

in C.

in G.

in B.

in A.

in E.

in H.

in Fis.

in Gis.

D.et C.Nr. 2705.

Plate 3
KINFACHE SCALEN DER 8 TONARTE.

in F.

in B.

in Es.

in As.

in Des.

in Ges.

in Ges.

D.1G.N.2708.

Plate 4
Scala für die Bass-Posaune.

Scala für die Tenor-Posaune.

Scala für die Alt-Posaune.

Drs. Nr. 2705.
Plate 10
Plate 11
KAPITEL

Beinahe alles das nämliche gilt auch von der Bass- oder sogenannten Quart-Posaune. Sie heisst deswegen Quartposaune, weil sie um 4 Töne tiefer stützt, daher auch grösser ist, als die andern Posaunen, und sie findet ihre Anwendung besonders beym Militär. Ihr Grundton ist gewöhnlich F, selten As und G.


Det. C.Nr. 2705.

Plate 12
SCALA FÜR DIE QUART-POSAUNE.

Plate 13